

From the Charleston Observer. PERSIA. Extract of a Letter from Rev. J. L. Merrick to the Secretary of the Southern Board of Foreign Missions, dated February 10, 1836.

Years of laborious research and missionary inquiry led me to believe that a door of hope and rich promise was opening in Persia for the dissemination of the Gospel. This hope was not diminished on entering the country, although I saw difficulties in my way which my previous inquiries had not led me fully to anticipate. Encouragements presented themselves in various quarters, and my hopes really brightened; under the influence of which I went home at various times cheering reports. But for the last four or five months, clouds have been gathering over my hopes, and especially since I left Tabriz, on the 6th of June, have my inquiries added continual gloom to my prospects, and sorrow to my soul—a sorrow from which I find no relief but in bowing submissively to the sovereign will of God.

Wonderful Excitement in the City of Isfahan. At Teheran the prospect for Missionary labor was but faintly shown. The British Ambassador, Mr. Pakenham, and other English gentlemen, had informed me that this was probably the most bigoted city in the kingdom, and so far as my researches have extended, this statement is fully confirmed by my own observations. You are aware that I reached the journey from Teheran to this place in company with two German Missionaries, who are also exploring Persia in behalf of the Basili Missionary Society. They brought with them a considerable supply of books in the Persian language, consisting of Testaments, copies of the Psalms, of the Prophecy of Solomon, and of the Prophecy of Isaiah. Some of them were distributed in a village near Isfahan, to eager applicants for them, moolahs and people. This was soon reported in the city, causing "no small stir," as it was also proclaimed that these Frankes had not only brought a multitude of books subversive of the Mohammedan faith, but had also come with the intention of attacking the Mohammedan religion. This false report threw all Isfahan into an uproar, and some fanatic volunteers went to a famous Mussulman saint, here, and declared their intention of relieving their religion from danger, and the public mind from harm, by killing these dangerous and infidel Frankes. With the holy man replied, we have not been informed.

Determination to Murder the Missionaries. The Governor, hearing of the design against our lives, provided for us a guard of thirty men, who were stationed around our house, and in all the streets leading to it. We felt no alarm; in the first place, because we were in the care of the people who would reach us; but chiefly because, with a conscience void of offence, we trusted in God for protection. It is proper here to remark, that not a book had been given or sold to any Mussulman of the city, excepting some specimens presented to the Governor, and one copy of the Prophecy of Isaiah, which was distributed among the Mohammedans, although there had been reports of important applicants; nor had a word of controversy on the subject of religion been spoken by any of us, notwithstanding we were daily attacked and beset, and provoked by capricious disputants. The day following the report, we were surrounded by a guard of soldiers, namely, on the 27th inst. the Imam-Teomah, or Chief Moolah of Persia, attended by moolahs, soldiers, and servants, honored us with a visit, the object of which evidently was to try our motives and ascertain our plans. My companions told them truly that they came to establish a school among the Armenians, and that they had no wish or design to dispute against the Mussulman religion. This great Mohammedan Doctor and the moolahs who accompanied him endeavored to bring on a controversy, but not succeeding, they left, apparently with a favorable impression respecting us. The Imam-Teomah is a courteous, and appears to be an amiable man. In leaving, he assured us of his friendship and protection.

Hazee Sayed Mohammed Bakher, the great Mussulman Saint. It is now in place to speak of the great Mussulman Saint of Persia, Hazee Sayed Mohammed Bakher, who is esteemed so much divine, that the people believe he can do almost anything, and mingling it with water, administer it to the sick as a prescription possessing miraculous powers. This man is not only a reputed Saint, but is also rich in this world's good, which enables him to aid his religious influence with the hand of charity. While a company, collected at his house, were deliberating what should be done with such a religious man, and if he were to be put to death, it was communicated to them that we ourselves wished to wait on this semi-prophet. Accordingly the next day, a messenger was sent to conduct us to the presence of this man, whose house is a sanctuary from the laws of the kingdom. We waited some time before he appeared. Such, at least is our opinion, judging from all we saw and heard. You may, perhaps, suppose that we felt alarm in such circumstances; but I assure you that for myself I felt none, and have reason to believe that the same was true of my companions. To me the scene was full of lively interest; and my mind glancing away to his beloved friends in America, and now would they tell what they think, and now would they feel what they see us now! The interview lasted about half an hour, and when we rose to depart, the Aga (lord) for so he is called by the people, made us the usual professions, and altogether our leave was politely given. A man of some influence and family, the Aga invited us to his house, and treated us with fruit, and sherbet.

Continued Alarm in the City. I do not know what evil thing the Mohammedan Council found to say of us after we left their presence; but it is certain that the people are still in alarm, lest we should "turn the world upside down." We have just been informed that yesterday numbers went to the great high priest of the Persians, accusing us, and desiring favor against us; and that one companion, especially, begged permission "to kill, slay, and cause to perish," those accursed Frankes, who were filling all the true believers' minds with their false doctrines.

Such a day of prayer during the present century. The other New England States did the same; and who shall say that this abundant mercy was not given in return for the supplication of this people, presented to a prayer-hearing God? We hold it to be a correct sentiment, that, in the dealings of divine providence with communities, they are usually treated according to their visible, organized character. In this view, the action of the government, the constitution, becomes the action of the whole body. When, therefore, the government of any well regulated State proclaims a Fast, or a day of prayer, God looks upon the people, so far as respects his providential dispensations, as humbled before him, confessing their sins and supplicating his grace, or rendering thanks and praise at the remembrance of his mercies.

Young Men for the Ministry. Mr. Tracy.—When we consider the immense want in our Western country of the preached gospel and of evangelical pastors, the question naturally arises, solemn as eternity, "how can this want be supplied?" If the present generation of the West are neglected, who, for the most part, prior to their emigration have enjoyed religious privileges, the church will have a more dreary field in their children, brought up without the preached gospel. Much of late has been learned by personal investigation. What would be the result of an investigation to ascertain how many young men there are in our Western country, who are not only pious, but who should be encouraged to study for the ministry? A late report of the Providence Young Men's Bible Society, says: "A clergyman in the county of Kent, to whom reference was made for information respecting that county, asserted to be his opinion that not more than half a dozen of the young men could be found in the whole county. The agent who supplied that county reports 144 families." As a further illustration of erroneous judgment, the county of Bristol, particularly the town of Warren, affords a striking example. The citizens of Warren were quite confident that I (says the agent) should find quite a number in the place. I overcame all, and in a few days, a gentleman of intelligence, and also a professor of religion, remarked that he could not think of a single family destitute of the Bible, while I found four in his immediate neighborhood.

What wonderful facts has the late investigation of the neglect of public worship brought to light! And our country, in respect to the results, if Pastors and professors of religion would make a systematic investigation of the above mentioned point. I say investigation; for what can we accomplish by resolving to do our duty in this particular as we may incidentally come in contact with the subjects of it? If we have lost our flocks or our herds, we search for them, and do not trust to incidentally meeting with them. The propriety and advantage of such an investigation made systematically, will commend itself to every one. It is to be sure, when they look on this and that young man, at his plough or at his trade, with a mind of little or no cultivation, and laboring under the embarrassments of poverty, "God never intended that such an one should study for the ministry." But few will indulge such feelings who are acquainted with facts—facts which are numerous, and in many respects like the one related in the August No. of the Quarterly Journal of the Am. Education Society; an account of a young man, who, struggling with the embarrassments of a miserable early education and the exceeding baseness of youth, and during his college course with the discouragements of great poverty and sometimes poor health, overcame all, and is now a settled minister of the gospel, apparently of great promise.

The above remarks I would suggest for the consideration of pastors and people, hoping they may be worthy of prayerful attention. The wants of one half of New England are as pressing as those of the West; and the consequences of neglecting them will be equally disastrous. Colored People of Boston. From the Report of the Rev. R. Spaulding, to the Boston Auxiliary of the American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race; embodied in the annual Report of the Auxiliary. In the discharge of the duties imposed upon me, I have visited every family of colored persons in the city. That I might be assured that none were omitted, I have made diligent and patient inquiries through every street and lane within its limits. I have left no opportunity unimproved to obtain the most perfect knowledge of their character and circumstances that I have been able. I have visited and conversed with them as their friend, without reference to any question with which our country has, unfortunately, been so painfully agitated. In my inquiries among them, I have never once introduced the subject of "Abolition," or "Colonization." My reason for this course, you must perceive and approve. With these questions your society does not necessarily interfere; your object being, not to excite them upon questions foreign to them, and over which they can have no control; but to awaken in them an enlightened desire for improvement, and to afford them such assistance as you may be able, in the attainment of that object. I am happy to know, that the object of my agency has commended itself to the judgment and feelings of the more intelligent portion of them, many of whom feel a commendable interest in the improvement of their race, although they see but little prospect of an event so desirable. Another source of them is almost entirely indifferent to the subject, being abandoned nearly all hope of such an improvement, until public sentiment and feeling shall have materially changed towards them. While the third class look upon every effort that is made in their behalf, except through the medium of "abolitionism," as dictated only by duplicity and a desire for their utter extermination. Many of their classes are exceedingly superstitious and degraded, and truly the objects of our compassion. When we have convinced them that we are interested in their behalf, and that they may confide in our friendship, an important point will be gained. We have then to convince them that they have within themselves the elements of respectability, the materials of their own fortune; that sobriety, industry and economy will insure them the respect of all from whom respect is desirable. But as it now is, many of them have seemed to lose sight of this point, and are looking forward in expectation of some ideal good yet to come, as the fruit of the abolition excitement. They frequently speak of what their friends are doing for them by these means, and many of them could hardly be persuaded that any man could be the true friend of the colored man, who is







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